

# Communications

LOCAL 6733  
3211 E. Yandell  
El Paso, Texas 79903



## Workers of America

(AFFILIATED WITH AFL-CIO)

October 14, 2009

RE: BROADBAND INDUSTRY PRACTICES, WC DOCKET 07-52

Chairman Julius Genachowski

Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker

Commissioner Mignon Clyburn

Commissioner Michael J. Copps

Commissioner Robert McDowell

I am fortunate to lead the local Communications Workers of America union in El Paso, one of the Nation's most diverse and dynamic cities. Together with Ciudad Juarez, our neighbor and Sister City, and our northern neighbor Las Cruces, New Mexico, we are part of a \$50 billion economy that represents one of the fastest growing regions in the country.

More than ever before, El Pasoans depend on broadband Internet connectivity and reliable wireless communications to drive the engine of commerce and keep in touch with family members on both sides of the border. Our schools increasingly make use of online resources to educate our children, and our hospitals and clinics utilize telemedicine and wireless technologies to improve the health care of our citizens.

In the last four years, we have seen record job creation and attraction with 23 companies announcing they will locate in El Paso, creating close to 6,300 new jobs and over \$144 million worth of capital investment – these are all new business to El Paso. This is remarkable progress for our City. Another 17,000 people commute daily between the Las Cruces and El Paso/Juarez area for school, business, general travel and recreational purposes.

A significant economic driver is the Medical Center of the Americas. It has been a long-time goal of El Paso to create a wide-ranging medical hub that would position our city as the "Health Care Capital for the Population of Tomorrow." With El Paso positioned and poised as the place for health care delivery, education and research in the Paso del Norte

Region, we will see a huge economic impact on our community. Telemedicine increasingly improves the health care outcomes for indigent and non-indigent patients alike, and technology is extending the reach of health care professionals far outside the hospital walls.

Investment in the communications infrastructure -- broadband and wireless -- is crucial for the continued economic growth of our region. As our population grows, so to does the demand for fast, reliable connectivity. It would be a shame to see years of progress halted by unnecessary regulation, such as the network neutrality proposals pending before the Federal Communications Commission. Now is simply not the time to begin regulating one of the chief drivers of this Nation's economic recovery.

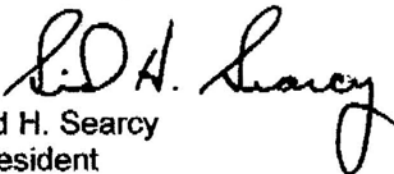
The El Paso area was first provided 3G service only within the last 18 months, despite our status as a hub of international commerce and the fast pace of our economic growth. It is not a given that we will receive the next generation of wireless service if regulations reduce investment in wireless networks. The chilling effect of regulation upon investment could have serious consequences for a region growing as fast as ours.

It is also a matter of jobs. Unionized labor builds the Internet and expands its reach in El Paso. Slowing down the growth of the Internet means losing real jobs.

I urge the commission to proceed slowly and deliberately on the issue of network neutrality specifically and Internet regulation generally. For the Paso del Norte Region, there is no question that the Internet and wireless communications have fueled a substantially better quality of life and a stronger economy, and they have done so without government intervention or regulation.

Any action the commission takes should reduce the risk of investing in these technologies so they may continue to spur our economy and way of life. Actions to the contrary, such as adopting network neutrality regulations, will not benefit the regional economy, our hard-working union members, or El Pasoans.

Respectfully,



Sid H. Searcy  
President  
CWA Local 6733

SHS:gm

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